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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0279  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 002325

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2017

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SUBJECT: CNE UPDATES REFERENDUM RESULTS AND RE-CERTIFIES  
"NO" WIN

REF: CARACAS 002274

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT DOWNES,  
REASON 1.4 (D)

11. (U) National Electoral Council (CNE) President Tibisay Lucena released the "final" results of the December 2 constitutional referendum late on December 7 based on 94 of the returns. She reiterated that both blocks of proposed changes to the 1999 Constitution had been defeated. Although some 200,000 votes remain to be counted, Lucena reiterated that the "NO" camp's victory is irreversible, just as she said when the CNE released the preliminary results based on 88 of the returns at 1:19 a.m. on December 3 (Reftel). She told reporters that the CNE does not expect to have 100 of the results for weeks.

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Final Results  
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12. (U) The CNE reported the following "final" results on December 7 (figures rounded to the nearest tenth):

Block A: No: 4,521,494 (50.7%)  
Yes: 4,404,626 (49.3%)

Block B: No: 4,539,707 (51.0%)  
Yes: 4,360,014 (49.0%)

Abstention was 44% and 43.9% for Blocks A and B, respectively.

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Comment  
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13. (C) Comment: The "Yes" camp still carried 15 of Venezuela's 23 states, but the "No" camp carried many of the most populous states as well as Caracas. In general, the "No" camp did better in urban areas, while the "Yes" camp tended to dominate rural areas. The "No" camp did particularly well in states with at least one major university, as well as in states in which civil society NGOs remain active. The "No" camp also tended to do better in states in which there are still important elected state (Zulia and Nueva Esparta) and municipal officials from the opposition.

14. (C) The "No" camp also benefited considerably from the

decision of Chavez' former coalition member Podemos party to advocate against Chavez' proposed changes to the 1999 constitution. Although, the "Yes" camp narrowly won both states that have Podemos governors (Aragua and Sucre), Chavismo experienced its most significant reduction in percentage of pro-government votes in both those states compared to the 2006 presidential election (down 19 percent and 22.6% percent, respectively). Interestingly, Chavez lost both in overall number of votes and percentage of votes in all 23 states and Caracas compared to the 2006 election. End Comment.

FRENCH